

ANNEX C

EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

I. PURPOSE

To provide for the timely release of accurate information to the residents of Christian County in the event of a disaster or emergency and to gain public confidence by providing information that is:

- a. Timely
- b. Empathetic
- c. Caring
- d. Accurate
- e. Credible
- f. Pertinent
- g. Keep the public calm
- h. Acknowledging uncertainty
- i. Recognizing people's fears
- j. Taking care not to over-reassure
- k. Explaining the process in place to find answers
- l. Expressing wishes ("I wish I had answers....")
- m. Giving people specific things to do
- n. Asking more of people (to share the risk)
- u. To direct public action as determined by the CCHD;
- n. To meet the needs of the news media;
- o.. To meet the needs of partners/stakeholders; and

p.. To coordinate with other federal, state, and local agencies involved in responding and providing information to the public.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. Adequate news media exist in Christian and surrounding counties (newspaper, radio and television) that can disseminate information and instruct the general public in the event of a disaster or emergency.
2. There are no prominent groups of non-English speaking people in Christian County. Dissemination of information will be in English. If necessary, the translation of emergency public information will be coordinated with the area schools' foreign languages staff.
3. News media serving Christian County are:

NEWSPAPERS: Springfield News Leader (daily)
Christian County Headliner (weekly)
Christian County News Journal (weekly)
Republic Monitor (weekly)
Nixa Enterprise (weekly)

RADIO STATIONS: KTTS 1400AM/94.7FM Springfield
KWTO 560AM/98.7FM Springfield
KGBX 1260AM Springfield
KSMU 91.1FM Springfield
KTOZ 95.5 FM Springfield
KHTO 106.7 FM Springfield
KHOZ 102.9 FM Springfield
KOMG 92.9 FM Springfield
KZRQ 104.1 FM Springfield
KKLH 104.7 FM Springfield
KSPW 96.5 FM Springfield

TELEVISION STATIONS: KSPR, Channel 33
KOLR, Channel 10
KYTV, Channel 3
KOZK, Channel 21
KDEB, Channel 27
WBN, Channel 31

CABLE TELEVISION: There is no cable-television service for residents in the rural areas of Christian County, however, several of the cities are served by Classic Cable in Ozark.

4. EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS): The primary EAS radio station for Christian County is KTTS, located at 2330 West Grand, in Springfield. All of the television stations listed above serve as primary EAS television stations. See Incident Management Guide for activation procedures.
5. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Less than 2 percent of Christian County residents either speak English poorly or not at all. However, that number is expected to increase greatly in the coming Years. The foreign language staff from area high schools may provide any necessary translation of emergency public information.

B. Assumptions

1. The media serving Christian County will cooperate with local officials in the dissemination of information to the public.
2. Widespread or major disasters may result in state and national media coverage for an extended period of time.
3. Media personnel may attempt to obtain information from other than "official sources".
4. An effective public information program will reduce casualties and damages.

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Dissemination of public information will utilize all available media: television, radio, and newspaper. Activation of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) will be in accordance with County & State EAS Plans.
2. To ensure the coordination of public information when more than one jurisdiction is involved, a Joint Information Center (JIC) should be established. Using the JIC as a central location, information can be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions and agencies, and among all government partners, the private sector, and nongovernmental agencies.

3. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will be located in the primary EOC which will serve as the single point of contact for the media during an emergency.
4. If a Joint Information Center has not been established, the chief elected official will approve release of official public information. Only that information released by the designated PIO will be considered official.
5. Response organizations are responsible for coordinating with the PIO or JIC and for clearing press releases with the jurisdictions chief executive before releasing information for public use. Public information personnel in the field will coordinate with the PIO through frequent contacts with the EOC staff.
6. A rumor control section will answer inquiries from the public and monitor broadcasts to insure the public is receiving accurate information.
7. A major task of public information operations will be responding to inquiries. The PIO will establish procedures to inform families on the status of relatives that are injured or missing, emergency services that are available, damaged and/or restricted areas due to a disaster event, etc.
8. The PIO will work with the Health and Medical Coordinator to prepare EPI materials that describe the health risks associated with each hazard, the appropriate self-help or first-aid actions, and other appropriate survival measures.
9. Should the need arise: the PIO will see that EPI materials are prepared for the visually impaired and non-English speaking groups.
10. The PIO will coordinate with the Emergency Management Director to prepare instructions for people who must evacuate from a high risk area (as a result of a flooding, dam failure, etc.). These EPI materials will include the following for each threat:
 - Definition of the population at risk
 - Evacuation routes
 - Types and quantities of clothing, food, medical items, etc. evacuees should take with them
 - Locations of reception areas and shelters.
 - Safe travel routes for return to residences
 - Centrally located staging areas and pick-up points for evacuees without private automobiles or other means of transportation

- Location of reception centers, shelters/lodging, feeding facilities, and medical clinics, etc., in the hosting area

11. During a disaster event, the Christian County Emergency Management Agency (CCEMA) will coordinate and deliver risk communication and public health information to the public through every available channel, including;

- o. The media (through a Joint Information Center [JIC], if activated),
- p. The County Web sites:
 - a. christiancountymo.gov
 - b. ema.christiancountymo.gov
- q. The CCEMA phone bank,
- r. Community meetings,
- s. Distributed flyers
- t. Through partners/stakeholders.

These operations will be accomplished in close coordination with the Governor's Press Office, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) public information officer (PIO), other appropriate State agency public information officers, law enforcement, public safety, and municipal government administrators, in accordance with federal, state, and local emergency plans.

B. Actions to be Taken by Operating Time Frames

1. Mitigation

- a. Develop and conduct public information programs stressing hazard awareness and personal protection measures.
- b. Develop procedures for:
 - (1) Rumor control
 - (2) News releases
 - (3) Coordination with departmental Public Information Officers
 - (4) Record keeping
 - (5) Print and broadcasting

- c. Establish contact with local EAS stations and develop procedures for emergency release of information.
 - d. Prepare emergency public information (EPI) packages for release during emergencies and distribute them to local media.
 - e. Participate in tests, exercises and NIMS Training.
- 2. Preparedness
 - a. Analyze the potential disaster to ensure pertinent information is prepared for release.
 - b. Issue information through the media and EAS stations to allow the public to take protective actions.
 - c. Begin rumor control operations.
 - d. Establish a location for release of information and advise the media.
- 3. Response
 - a. Release emergency information as necessary, as well as reception and care locations for evacuees.
 - b. Schedule and conduct briefings for the media.
 - c. Monitor news media reports for accuracy and conduct other rumor control activities.
 - d. Issue announcements urging residents to share their homes with evacuees, if necessary.
 - e. Maintain a chronological record of news releases (See Incident Management Guide-Response).
- 4. Recovery
 - a. Continue to distribute public information as needed.
 - b. Continue rumor control and news briefings.
 - c. Supply information concerning the status of disaster-affected individuals.

- d. Maintain operational level until the situation returns to normal.
- e. Participate in after-action reports and critiques.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

A diagram of the Emergency Public Information function is shown in Appendix 1 to this annex.

B. Responsibilities

1. The primary responsibility for Emergency Public Information in Christian County rests with the County Commission. The County Commission will designate a PIO as warranted by the situation. The PIO for each municipality will be the chief elected official or his designee. The PIO will:
 - a. Maintain and release public information for all identified hazards
 - b. Manage a rumor control section and monitor media broadcasts for accuracy.
 - c. Coordinate news releases with the Chief Elected Official, departments, emergency services, Joint Information Center, etc.
 - d. Maintain agreements of understandings with news media for release of information (EAS stations).
 - e. Conduct periodic briefings for media personnel.
2. The Chief Elected Official (i.e., Presiding Commissioner, Mayor) or the Joint Information Center is responsible for approving news releases.
3. The County Emergency Management Director will:
 - a. Provide normal day-to-day public information duties for Christian County.

- b. Assist the County PIO in preparing and releasing public information during a disaster.
- 4. Each operating department will appoint a PIO as necessary. Department PIOs will provide information to the County and/or City PIO or the Joint Information Center and will help coordinate the release of public information.
 - a. The County Health Department will provide information regarding health risks associated with the hazard and the appropriate ways to minimize these risks.

V. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

- A. The primary responsibility for Emergency Public Information in Christian County is assigned to the County Commission. The Presiding Commissioner will serve as PIO or the County Commission will appoint a PIO as needed.
- B. The PIO for the City of Ozark will be designated according to the emergency situation as follows:
 - Law Enforcement – Police Chief
 - Fire – PIO or Assistant Chief
 - Flood, Tornado – Emergency Management Director
 - All other – Mayor or City Administrator
- C. The PIO for the other municipalities will be the Mayor or designee.
- D. The Public Information Officer for Hazardous Materials Incidents/WMD in Christian County will be appointed by the Incident Commander. See the Christian County Hazardous Materials Response Plan (Annex H and the Terrorism Annex N).
- E. All press releases should be cleared with the PIO, Chief elected official or Joint Information Center before they are released to the media.
- F. Each operating department or agency will appoint a PIO as necessary. Department/Agency PIO's will provide information to the County and/or City PIO or JIC and will help coordinate the release of public information.
- G. The PIO will be responsible for the operation of the rumor control section.

H. JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

1. Introduction: During emergencies, the public may receive information from a variety of sources. Part of the PIO's job is ensuring that the information that the public receives is accurate, coordinated, timely, and easy to understand. One way to ensure the coordination of public information is by establishing a Joint Information Center (JIC). Using the JIC as a central location, information can be coordinated and integrated across jurisdictions and agencies, and among all government partners, the private sector, and nongovernmental agencies.
2. A JIC is the physical location where public information staff involved in incident management activities can collocate to perform critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. JICs provide the organizational structure for coordinating and disseminating critical information.
3. JICs may be established at various levels of government. All JICs must communicate and coordinate with each other on an ongoing basis using established JIS protocols. When multiple JICs are established, information must be coordinated among them to ensure that a consistent message is disseminated to the public.

VI. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

A. Line of succession for Christian County Emergency Public Information

1. County Commission
2. County Public Information Officer (if designated)
3. County Emergency Management Director

- B. If the EOC is not functional or a total evacuation is necessary, PIO operations will be from an alternate location (see Annex A). In a limited emergency, PIO operations may be directed from an EOC at a site designated at that time.

VII Vehicles for Crisis Information

The CCEMA will use the following vehicles to provide risk communication and to inform and instruct the media, citizens, and partners/stakeholders about public safety factors involved in the emergency.

1. Telephone, with calls made to media and partners/stakeholders and received on out phone bank from citizens.
2. E-mail, using prepared media, and partner/stakeholder lists, and list serves.
3. Fax, using pre-programmed broadcast fax lists on a fax computer and a separate (redundant) fax machine.
4. Partner newsletters and fax and/or e-mail distribution lists.
5. Mail and Airborne Express to send video news releases and other bulky items.
6. Face-to-face, including media briefings and community meetings.
7. CCEMA Web site, partner/stakeholder Web sites, and media Web sites.
8. Media, including print, radio, and television.
9. Printed materials, including Quick Facts sheets (available on the Web) and other specialty materials

APPENDICES

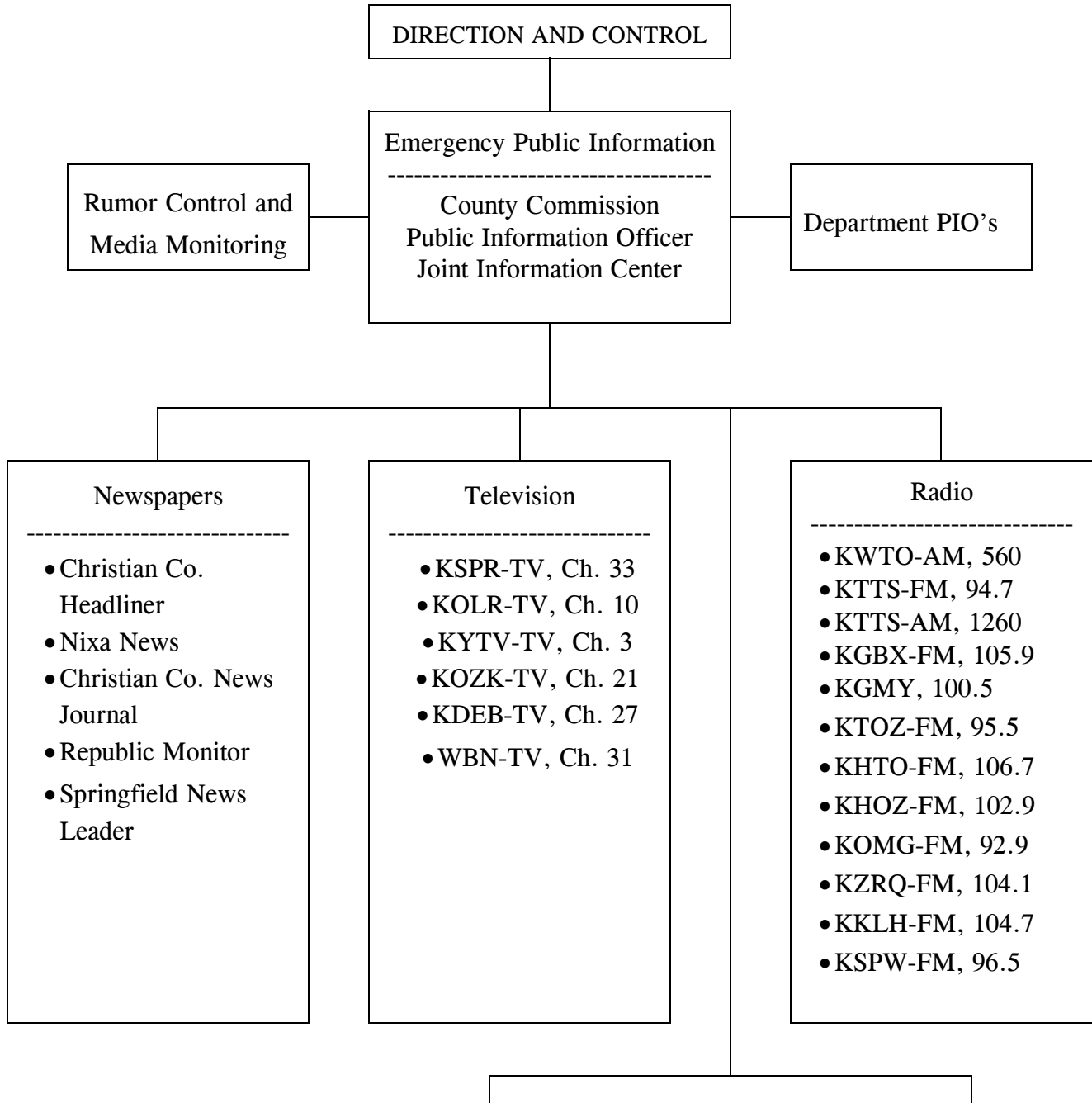
Appendix 1: Emergency Public Information Diagram

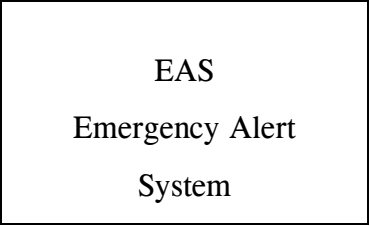
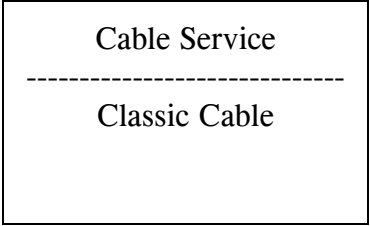
Appendix 2: Principles of Risk Communication

Appendix 3: Prepared News Releases

Appendix 4: News Release Log

EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION DIAGRAM





Appendix 2 to Annex C

Principles of Risk Communication

1. Be first. Be right. Be credible.

In a crisis, people make decisions differently. They simplify, and cling to current beliefs. They remember what they see or have previously experienced, which means that first messages carry more weight. So in a crisis, we initially communicate:

- a. Simply
- b. Timely
- c. Accurately
- d. Repeatedly
- e. Credibly
- f. Consistently

We can build trust and credibility by expressing:

- a. Empathy and caring
- b. Competence and expertise
- c. Honesty and openness
- d. Commitment and dedication

2. Be careful with risk comparisons

Experts say the true risk and the perceived risk can be quite different. The source of the risk can be as troubling as the degree of risk. Be careful not to compare a high outrage, low hazard risk to a low outrage, high hazard risk. Bioterrorism is, for most people, high outrage and low hazard. It can't be compared with a low outrage, high hazard risk like driving a car. Here is a risk comparison that could work: "Research indicated that, in Hawaii, a person is 10 times more likely to be killed by brain damage from a falling coconut than to be killed by a shark." In this case, the risks are both natural in origin, fairly distributed, exotic, and outside the control of the individual.

3. Don't over-reassure

According to experts, a high estimate of harm modified downward is much more acceptable to the public than a low estimate of harm modified upward. Tell people how scary the situation is, even though the actual numbers are small, and watch them get calmer.

4. Put the good news in subordinate clauses.

Experts say one very good approach is to put the good news in subordinate clauses, with the more alarmist side of the ambivalence in the main clause. Example: "It's too soon to say we're out of the woods yet, even though we haven't seen a new anthrax case in X days."

5. Acknowledge uncertainty

Acknowledging uncertainty, experts say, is most effective when the communicator both shows his or her distress and acknowledges the audience's distress: "How I wish I could give you a definite answer on that."

6. Stop trying to allay panic

According to experts, bad news doesn't cause panic. Panic comes from conflicting message from those in authority.

7. Recognize the difference in your audiences

The person who's removed from the real danger but is anticipating the high risk is much more likely to respond inappropriately than the person in the heat of the battle who is primed to act on the information and doesn't have time to mull it over, experts say. The vicarious rehearsal can be overwhelming in an emergency.

8. Acknowledge people's fears

Experts say that when people are afraid, the worst thing to do is pretend they're not. The second worst is to tell them they shouldn't be afraid. Allow people the right to feel fear.

9. Give people things to do

Anxiety is reduced by action and a restored sense of control. There are three types of actions:

- a. Symbolic behaviors, like going to a candlelight vigil
- b. Preparatory behaviors, like buying water and batteries

- c. Contingent “if, then” behaviors, like creating an emergency family communication plan.

Ask more of people, to share the risk. Recommend a three-part action plan:

- a. You must do X
- b. You should do Y
- c. You can do Z

10. Crafting the initial message

Go forward as quickly as possible with what you do know. Explain the process of discovering what you don’t know. Use these tips:

- a. Be short.
- b. Be relevant.
- c. Give positive action steps.
- d. Be repetitive.
- e. Avoid all jargon.
- f. Don’t be judgmental.
- g. Don’t make promises that can’t be kept.
- h. Don’t use humor.

11. Dealing with rumors

Rebut a rumor without really repeating it. Limit the rebuttal to the places where the rumor exists.

12. Prepare to answer these questions

- a. Are my family and I safe?
- b. What can I do to protect myself and my family?
- c. Who is in charge here?
- d. What can we expect?

- e. Why did this happen?
- f. Were you forewarned?
- g. Why wasn't this prevented?
- h. What else can go wrong?
- i. When did you begin working on this?
- j. What does this information mean?

As a spokesman

- a. Know your organization's policies.
- b. Stay within the scope of responsibilities.
- c. Tell the truth.
- d. Embody your agency's identity.

Stay on message

- a. "What's important is to remember..."
- b. "I can't answer that question, but I can tell you..."
- c. "Before I forget, I want to tell your viewers..."
- d. "Let me put that in perspective..."

Appendix 3 to Annex C

PREPARED NEWS RELEASES
SAMPLE RADIO/TV MESSAGE

FLOOD EVACUATION ORDERED

This is _____. The flooding situation continues in parts of _____ (county/city) and may worsen.

For your safety, I am asking that you leave the _____ area as soon as possible (give boundaries of local area, evacuation routes). Be sure to take essential items -- medicine, special foods, personal items, baby supplies, clothing, money, and valuable papers -- but do not overload your car. Secure your home before you leave. Be sure to check on any neighbors who may need assistance.

If you cannot stay with relatives or friends outside of the evacuation area, go to (one of) the Red Cross shelter(s) at _____.

Pets will not be allowed in Red Cross shelters. If you cannot make arrangements for someone outside the evacuation area to take care of your pet, _____ (give instructions) Don't allow your pet to run loose. If you can't make arrangements for your large animals, (give instructions)

SUMMARY STATEMENT FOR MEDIA

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

(To be adapted according to the situation.)

At approximately ____am/pm today, a spill/release of a potentially hazardous substance was reported to this office by (a private citizen, city employee, etc.). (Police/Fire) units were immediately dispatched to cordon off the area and direct traffic.

The material was later determined to be (describe) , a (hazardous/harmless) (chemical, gas, substance, material) which, upon contact, may produce symptoms of _____

Precautionary evacuation of the (immediate/X-block) area surrounding the spill was (requested/required) by (agency). Approximately (number) persons were evacuated.

Clean-up crews from (agency/company) were dispatched to the scene and normal traffic had resumed by (time), at which time residents were allowed to return to their homes.

There were no injuries reported -OR- _____ persons, including (fire/police) personnel, were treated at area hospitals for _____ and (all/number) were later released. Those remaining in the hospital are in _____ condition.

Response agencies involved were _____.

SAMPLE MEDIA MESSAGE

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

This is _____ at the _____. An earthquake of undetermined magnitude has just been felt in the _____ area. At this time, we have no confirmed reports of injuries or damage. Police and fire units are responding to the area.

We will keep you informed as reports come in. Meanwhile, be prepared for aftershocks. If shaking begins again, quickly seek shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture or in a supporting doorway.

If your house has been damaged and you smell gas, shut off the main gas valve. Switch off electrical power if you suspect damage to the wiring. Do not use your telephone unless you need emergency help.

SAMPLE MEDIA MESSAGE

UPDATE ON EARTHQUAKE

This is _____ at the _____. The magnitude of the earthquake which struck the _____ area at (time) today, has been determined to be _____ on the Richter scale. The epicenter has been fixed at _____ by (scientific authority).

This office has received reports of _____ deaths, _____ injuries, and _____ homes damaged. No dollar figure is yet available. Police and Fire units are on the scene to assist residents. (Continue with summary of the situation.) Aftershocks continue to be felt in the area.

If you feel shaking, quickly seek shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture or in a supporting doorway. Do not use your telephone unless you need emergency help.

SUMMARY STATEMENT FOR MEDIA
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION INCIDENT

(To be adapted according to the situation.)

At approximately ____am/pm today, a incident involving a weapon of mass destruction was reported to this office by (a private citizen, city employee, etc.). (Police/Fire) units were immediately dispatched to cordon off the area and direct traffic. The type of weapon was later determined to be (describe), a (hazardous/harmless) (chemical, gas, substance, material) which, upon contact, may produce symptoms of _____.

Precautionary evacuation of the (immediate/X-block) area surrounding the incident was (requested/required) by (agency). Approximately (number) persons were evacuated, _____ hospitalized, _____ missing, and _____ killed.

Shelters are being set up at _____ and are being operated by the Red Cross. If you would like to inquiry or report a missing person please direct those calls to _____.

Rescue and recovery crews from (agency/company) were dispatched to the scene and will continue their efforts till all persons are accounted for or all debris is removed.

Response agencies involved include _____.

Appendix 4 to Annex C

News Release Log

Date	Time	Subject	Originator